TELLS THE FACTS AND NAMES THE NAMES

CounterPunch

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Kidnapped for Reasons of State

Peggy Gibson and the Stolen Children

By Eamonn McCann

On Monday, November 16, Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd apologized to the thousands of surviving "orphans" from the Child Migrants scheme, under which up to 150,000 children, starting in 1929, had been brought in batches from Britain and Ireland to stock the continent with white Christians. Australia's elite feared that otherwise the continent would be overrun – in the words of Sir John Norris, the representative of the governor of Tasmania, to the annual meeting of the Big Brother migrant movement in Hobart in 1951 – by "some of the millions of Asiatics that menace us." The human export scheme only ended in 1967. A large majority of the children were not orphans at all but the children of the poorest of the poor. In the main, they were exported to the other side of the world without their families' knowledge, much less consent. Many who survived continue to bear the scars of the cruelties they endured. The main organization involved in the operation in Ireland was the Catholic Church.

Peggy Gibson was taken from Derry when she was 6 years old, and thus lost forever her brother, for whom she vainly searched in later years.

"I remember him so well. I remember him looking after me when I was out playing in the street. I remember when I was in the Nazareth House and he was in Termonbaccca [girls' and boys' homes in Derry, run by the Sisters of Nazareth], the way I would wait for him on Sundays to come and take me out. He would take

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Why the Bush Crowd Should Not Leave the Jurisdiction

A Lawless Presidency

By Stephen Green

It is ironic that a president who owed his election to office to a U.S. Supreme Court decision – and a narrow one at that – spent so much of his eight years in office battling that same court, and the institutions which are the arbiters of international humanitarian law as well.

An early sign that George Bush was receiving (and possibly asking for) bad legal advice, particularly from the staffs of Vice President Richard Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, occurred in October 2001, when lawyers from these departments informed him that the Constitution (Fourth Amendment) would permit him to use the U.S. military to arrest several suspected terrorists in the suburbs of Buffalo.

In the end, virulent opposition from attorneys in the State and Justice Departments and the National Security Council prevailed, and the FBI was sent to make the arrests.

An even more embarrassing condemnation of the administration's legal acuity was delivered by the International Committee of the Red Cross in February 2004, with the publication of its "Report of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on Treatment by the Coalition Forces of Prisoners of War and Other Protected Persons by the Geneva Conventions in Iraq During Arrest, Internment and Interrogation."

The United States and its Coalition allies, all of which had, of course, signed the Geneva Conventions in 1949 and the protocols of 1970, were accused in the report of:

• brutality against protected persons upon capture and initial custody, sometimes causing death or serious injury;

• absence of notification to their families of arrest of persons deprived of their liberty;

• physical or psychological coercion during interrogation to secure information;

• prolonged solitary confinement in cells devoid of daylight;

• excessive and disproportionate use of force against persons deprived of their liberty, resulting in death or injury during their period of internment.

The ICRC delegates also noted – in Baghdad, Basrah, Ramadi and Tikrit – a "consistent pattern, with respect to times and places, of brutal behavior during arrest."

In the case of the "high value detainees" held in Baghdad International Airport, their continued internment – several months after their arrest, in strict solitary confinement in cells devoid of sunlight for nearly 23 hours a day – constituted a serious violation of the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions.

Notable in the report was the certification that many of the victims of Coalition Forces abuse were deemed not to be "detainees" or "enemy combatants" or "terrorists." They were, pure and simple, prisoners of war. That is a classification which, as stated in the Conventions, only the ICRC, and not Dick Cheney or Donald Rumsfeld, or their legal advisors, can make. More importantly, Cheney and Rumsfeld almost certainly did not understand just how important to them (and their attorneys) this distinction was in terms of probable subsequent prosecutions for violations of international humanitarian law.

Detainees, the Department of Defense and the Supreme Court

In June of 2004, the administration received the first of several serious blows from the Supreme Court to its "enemy

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combatant" detention policies. In a decision that year (*Rasul v. Bush*), the Court held that "United States courts have jurisdiction to consider challenges to the legality of the detention of foreign nationals captured abroad in connection with hostilities, and incarcerated at Guantanamo Bay."

The administration responded in 2006, when a Republican Congress passed the "Detention Treatment Act" (DTA), which required, according to the Congressional Research Service in a 2006 report to Congress, "... uniform standards for interrogation of persons in the custody of the Department of Defense" and banned "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of detainees in the custody of any U.S. agency anywhere overseas."

But, and this was the point, for the administration and the Republican Congressional majority, the DTA also "divested the courts of jurisdiction to hear some detainees' challenges by eliminating the federal courts' statutory jurisdiction over *habeas corpus* for aliens detained at Guantanamo Bay as well as other causes of action based on their treatment or living conditions."

In *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld* (2004), the Supreme Court had already reversed a Defense Department dismissal of a *habeas corpus* petition by a detainee, and was not pleased with what it considered in the DTA to be an end run by the administration.

The opportunity to resolve conflicting roles in determining detainee status landed in the Court's lap in the case of *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld* (2006). The Court, in finding for Hamdan and against Rumsfeld in a 5-3 decision, cited both Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and Article 21 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, which incorporates Article 3 of the Conventions in its text. Neither the Uniform Code of Military Justice nor the DTA, the majority ruled in a 5-4 vote, gave the military commissions (i.e., the Defense Department) the legal authority to make definitive decisions on *habeas corpus* petitions.

Cheney and Rumsfeld almost certainly did not understand just how important to them this distinction was in terms of probable prosecutions for violations of international humanitarian law.

Feith, Rumsfeld and "Alternative Intelligence"

On September 9, 2005, the earth shook a bit in Washington's intelligence community. Republican Senator Pat Roberts, chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, requested in writing that the Office of the Inspector General of the Defense Department "review whether the Office of Special Plans at DoD" at any time conducted unauthorized, unlawful or inappropriate intelligence activities."

What the request was really focused upon, however, was the activities of one individual: the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith; and specifically whether Feith's Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Plans OUSD(P) had, in the words of the inspector general's final report, dated February 9, 2007, "expanded its role and mission from that of formulating Defense Policy to one of analyzing and disseminating 'alternative intelligence.'"

The conclusion in the final report was that it had and that, as a result, Feith's office "did not provide the most accurate analysis of intelligence to senior decision makers."

The issue here was an important one, in the run-up to the Iraq war: whether Saddam Hussein and Iraq had a relationship with al-Qaida. The United Nations and the vast majority of the U.S. intelligence community were saying that the evidence was not there, but Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith and his ersatz intelligence operation at OUSD(P) were saying that it was.

The DoD inspector general's report was strong in its conclusion:

"The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy produced, and then disseminated alternative intelligence assessments on the Iraq and al-Qaida relationship, which included some conclusions that were inconsistent with the consensus of the intelligence community, to senior decision-makers. While such actions were not illegal or unauthorized, the actions were, in our opinion, inappropriate, given that the intelligence assessments were intelligence products and did not clearly show the variance with the intelligence community."

Douglas Feith, in his response to the DoD inspector general's conclusions, stated that his actions had been appropriate because they were "responding to direction from the Deputy Secretary of Defense," who was at the time Paul Wolfowitz. It was Wolfowitz and his boss, DoD Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who had proposed an immediate attack on Iraq at an emergency National Security Council meeting on the day after the destruction of the World Trade Center.

OUSD(P) was, in this timeframe, in the news for one other matter: Larry Franklin, the chief Iran analyst in OUSD(P), was convicted in a U.S. court in 2006 and sentenced to 13 years in prison for providing classified documents to the State of Israel, through employees of the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

The Principles of Universal Jurisdiction

There is a certain irony in the fact that

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in exactly the same time frame (2001-2007) that George Bush's White House (or, at least, Richard Cheney's portion of it) and the Defense Department were consciously, systematically developing ways to circumvent both national and international law in their pursuit of the "war on terror," distinguished lawyers and jurists from around the world began to coalesce to create an international legal framework to confront these and other threats to international law.

In January of 2001, a group of scholars and jurists gathered at Princeton University to discuss and draft a set of principles "for the purpose of advancing the continued evolution of international law, and the application of international law in national legal systems." The rationale for the meeting was further described in the final report: "Universal jurisdiction holds out the promise of greater justice, but the jurisprudence of universal jurisdiction is disparate, disjointed and poorly understood. So long as that is so, this weapon against impunity is potentially beset by incoherence, confusion, and, at times, uneven justice."

The definition of universal jurisdiction agreed by this group reads as follows: "criminal jurisdiction based solely on the nature of the crime, without regard to where the crime was committed, the nationality of the alleged or convicted perpetrator, the nationality of the victim, or any other connection to the state exercising such jurisdiction."

A further explanation of the concept was included in the materials distributed at the conference:

"A nation's courts exercise jurisdiction over crimes committed in its territory and proceed against those crimes committed abroad by its nationals, or against its nationals, or against its national interests. When these and other connections are absent, national courts may nevertheless exercise jurisdiction under international law over crimes of such exceptional gravity that they affect the fundamental interests of the international community as a whole."

The participants at Princeton were aware of and discussed the many precedents for their work: the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg in 1945, the International Military Tribunal for the Far East at Tokyo in 1946, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in 1993, and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in 1994. Beyond these, groups of nations have developed agreements using universal jurisdiction to combat counterfeiting, hijacking, piracy, endangering the safety of aviation, terrorism, the taking of hostages, and to protect diplomatic staff and nuclear material. Universal jurisdiction was not new or novel in 2001.

Universal jurisdiction, the participants decided, could be exercised by "a competent and ordinary judicial body of any state in order to try a person, duly accused of committing serious crimes under certain international instruments of law," including those mentioned above, without prejudice to other crimes.

The Indictments, Trials, Sentences, and Beyond

In March of this year, the same Spanish court, which had indicted former Chilean head of state General Augusto Pinochet in 1998 for torture and people's disappearances, announced that it was opening an inquiry into possible violations of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Torture Convention of 1984 by six former officials of the Bush administration.

Named were Alberto Gonzales, former U.S. attorney general; Douglas Feith, former under secretary of defense for policy; David Addington, head legal counsel for Vice President Richard Cheney; William Haynes, general counsel at DoD; John Yoo, deputy chief in the Office of Legal Counsel of the Justice Department; and Jay Bybee, assistant attorney general in Gonzales' office.

Last April, the Justice Department, in response to a Freedom of Information Act request from the American Civil Liberties Union, declassified and released four Bush administration memos justifying torture. In August, the CIA declassified a comprehensive, voluminous report of the Agency's inspector general, which had been issued last spring in highly redacted form. Among its conclusions is the following:

"The permissive environment created by implicit and explicit authorizations by senior U.S. officials to 'take the gloves off' encouraged forms of torture even beyond the draconian methods approved at various time between 2002 and 2004. … The fact that these unauthorized torture practices happened over extended periods of time at multiple U.S. detention facilities suggests that a permissive command environment existed across theaters and at several levels in the chain of command. This climate allowed *both authorized and unauthorized techniques to be practiced, apparently without consequence.*"

Finally, on November 4, an Italian judge announced that he had tried, convicted and sentenced *in absentia* to 5-8 years in prison 23 Americans (all but one are CIA agents) for the 2003 kidnapping from Milan of an Egyptian cleric and his rendition to Egypt, where he was tortured.

The CIA inspector general's report, even in a redacted form, will, no doubt, offer Judge Garzon in Spain and jurists in many other countries a road map for prosecution of senior Bush administration officials, well beyond those already indicted. The ACLU has already called for the appointment of a U.S. special prosecutor to investigate "torture under the Bush administration." Whether the Obama administration finds its courage or not, however, those already indicted, and the senior officials under whom Gonzales, Feith, Addington, etc., worked, would be well advised not to leave the United States, for under Universal

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me on a walk out the Letterkenny Road and lift me up and sit me on a wall, a wall that is there to this day, and we'd laugh together. He had bright red hair.

"And then they took me away and sent me to Australia. They never told me why. They never told me why they took me and not him. All my life ever after I kept it in my mind that I would find him again. I searched and searched, but nobody would tell me where to find him. Nobody would tell me anything."

Peggy Gibson was born Margaret McFadden. Her mother was also called Margaret. Her father was Patrick McAllister, nicknamed "Heavy." Her father and mother never married.

She says, "My early childhood was very happy, as I recall." She lived with her mother and her mother's parents and Pat, who was four years older, in Quarry Street in the Brandywell. "It was a real extended family, warm and full of affection. But then I was separated from my family when I was six." She was taken to live with the nuns at Nazareth House. Pat, 10, went to the boys' home at Termonbacca. Until many years later, she believed that this had happened because her mother died.

"Then I found out that I was taken from my family five and a half months before my mother died. Neither my brother nor myself was brought back to the house to see her before she died. Nobody told us."

They still hadn't told her by the time they sent her to Australia. She doesn't remember the details of being informed where she was going, only about a country where the fruit grew in thick clumps on the trees and the sun always shone. She remembers that, on the way out, a nun told her that she had no brother.

"We were taken to London and then to Southampton and onto the ship. There were several hundred children on the ship: Irish, English, Scottish, from Catholic homes, Church of England homes, the Salvation Army, from every welfare agency in the U.K. as far as I could see, all us so-called orphans, except that many of us weren't orphans at all."

She recalls that almost as soon as they had set sail, she was told that she was no longer to call herself "Peggy," that her name was now "Margaret Theresa." No one had ever called her that.

When the ship docked at Freemantle, she was taken with the other Catholic girls to the Nazareth House in Geraldton, which, she says, at least had a bit of a coastline, unlike Tardun where most of the boys from Derry went, which was like a desert. She says that the regime at Geraldton was "not kind – institutional life had a harshness at that period."

"I won't say much about the people in charge there. They weren't qualified. They didn't know us. Maybe they could have related to the aged or the infirm. But we were children. What I'll say is that because of the way we were treated, we bonded together, and that when I left I never went back."

She says that, when she was "tipped out of the orphanage at 16," she had it firmly in mind to start the search for her brother.

"I would cry myself to sleep and look forward to dreaming that my brother would come and find me in this foreign country and take me home."

"I knew that I was Irish and that I was from Derry and that I had a brother. I wrote to the Children's Welfare Department to ask them to help me find him. I have the answer here. It's all yellow now, with the date on it, 10 August 1956, promising to do all they can to help me find my brother. But that's the only thing they ever did, write that letter.

"I would cry myself to sleep and look forward to dreaming that my brother would come and find me in this foreign country and take me home. It's hard to explain now. But it did take a grip on me. I suppose it was a sort of obsession. It was the main thing I knew about myself, that I wasn't alone, that I had a brother, who had also been taken away from the family at the same time as me, who must be in the same situation as me."

After leaving the orphanage, she was sent to work as a "domestic" for a prominent Catholic lawyer in Perth. She was expected to work hard for long hours for little pay, and slept in an outhouse. She wanted to get as far away as she could get, and saved all she was paid until she had the boat fare to Melbourne, where she has lived ever since. She is married and has two sons.

"But I kept trying. I was speaking to the welfare authorities all the time, trying to get somebody to help me to get answers."

She began writing to any name she could discover in Derry, asking about her family, mainly about her brother. And, as a result, to her great disbelief, she found out in 1978 that her father, who she had long assumed to be dead, was still living in the Long Tower area in Derry. The following year, she came back to Derry with her husband, Bill, and met her father for her first time in 32 years.

He had had a serious alcohol problem. He hadn't been told where she had been taken, and knew nothing of the whereabouts of Pat. But, while in Derry, Peggy went to the Nazareth House on Bishop Street and rang the bell and asked if they could help her in her search.

"They turned me away. All they told me was, 'We have no information to impart.'"

She came back to Derry two years later and tried again. "And they just turned me away for the second time. It was disheartening, but I wasn't going to stop."

Encouraged by a new stirring of interest through publication in 1989 of *Lost Children of the Empire* by Australian journalists Philip Bean and Joy Melville – the book, which cracked the wall of silence around the story – Peggy traveled to Western Australia to a Nazareth Girls' reunion, to compare notes, and discovered that the Catholic Welfare Officer in Perth was holding the immigration papers of the 1947 emigrants.

"I went there in October 1991, and it was then that somebody put into my hand the papers that I had traveled on, that had brought me here. And there was my birth certificate, and my school records. I was 51, and for the first time had something setting out my identity. I stood there in the office and sobbed and sobbed."

Buoyed up by the breakthrough, and by the sense that the child migrant scandal was now bursting out into the open and couldn't be covered up much longer, Peggy and her husband scraped enough money together to contact a professional researcher in England and to send him, in March 1992, to Derry, armed with the new information. He discovered that, in

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1953, her brother Pat had been sent from Termonbacca to work for a farmer called Daly in "Ballybofey, County Monaghan."

She wrote to the Church authorities in Derry to ask if now they could help trace him. A few weeks were wasted, then it was realized that "Ballybofey" referred to Ballybay, County Monaghan. A few weeks after that, Peggy had a letter from Derry Bishop Edward Daly, telling her that her brother had died in Ballybay on August 4, 1990. She collapsed from grief on the street in Melbourne and had to be carried by her husband into her home. Pat hadn't really been difficult to find. She knows he could easily have been found sooner.

Peggy came back in Ireland in August the following year to attend a memorial mass at the Church of the Holy Rosary in Tullycorbett, Ballybay. Pat had been buried in the little graveyard outside. He had never married, lived alone, and seemingly had a reputation of not allowing anybody come close to him emotionally.

"I still find it hard to come to terms with the fact that he is dead. He was very real and alive to me in my sense of loss. I had held onto him because I had no immediate family on my side in Australia to share my sons with. He was their uncle and a brother-in-law to my husband. The sense of isolation was tremendous, 12,000 miles away.

"My brother suffered tremendously too. I know he felt the same way about me. People have told me that he mentioned me, spoke my name frequently. I had all these papers to show him, all the letters I'd written, and records of the people I'd spoken to, to try and find him. I wanted to be able to show him that I'd never forgotten him. I wanted to be able to say 'Look, see, there, I never gave up on you.' He was entitled to know that."

Peggy Gibson says that she deserves a letter from somebody in the Church, admitting that she was grievously wronged. "I want some recognition of what I have been made to endure and what I am still suffering. I find the grief I feel for my brother terrible to withstand. I want somebody to tell me why all this happened."

CP

Eamonn McCann lives in Derry, Northern Ireland, and can be reached at Eamonderry@aol.com.

What Do Grassroots Organizers Actually Do When They Organize?

By Mike Miller

In our last issue, Mark Rudd contributed an article on building a movement and the distinction between activists and organizers. Now, Mike Miller offers a veteran organizer's perspective. For five years in the 1960s, as a Student Nonviolent Organizing Committee field secretary, he directed a Saul Alinsky organizing project, and has been an organizer ever since. His work in San Francisco's Mission District was recently described by Joe Paff in this newsletter.

Mark Rudd's essay on organizing in the last issue of *CounterPunch* begins promisingly, with a concern that I share, about the "nothing anyone does can ever make a difference" response he is getting "in discussions with young people." Rudd distinguishes organizers from activists and evidences some understanding of organizing in his statement, "Organizers are activists who, in addition to their own participation, work to move other people to take action and help them develop skills, political analysis and confidence within the context of organizations."

But I would have liked to see more attention paid to one of the most important things that organizers do, namely, develop relationships of mutual confidence among people, so they can act together; also, that organizers, successful ones at least, build powerful organizations.

Here's where Rudd could think more about what it is that organizers do: "Organizing is a process – creating long-term campaigns that mobilize a certain constituency to press for specific demands from a particular target, using a defined strategy and escalating tactics." Not exactly: organizers build organizations that engage in campaigns. The process is organization building; one of the tools for doing that is action on issues. Other tools are mutual aid, member education, values reflection, internal organization renewal (when you're working with existing congregations and union locals), or building new organizational units (when you're creating a new, direct membership, organization), etc. Campaigns win things and are one of the things that build organizations. Organizers want to change the relations of power, not simply win this or that issue.

Rudd is interesting when he says, "We were organizers, our work was building a mass movement, and that took constant discussion of goals, strategy and tactics (and, later, contributing to our downfall, ideology.)" Here, Rudd and I appear to be on the same page: I'm particularly fascinated by the very last part of the point on ideology – after all my years of being told by various people on the left, "you don't have an ideology" (of course, everyone does, and you need to define the term), it was a bit surprising to read this.

The discussion of what he and his comrades did at Columbia is interesting too, and here he identifies building relationships of mutual confidence as crucial to what they did. His counterparts at San Francisco State similarly organized their campus. Their problem was that they didn't understand how to relate to the broader community – a subject, to which I devote considerable attention in my book, *A Community Organizer's Tale.* If you didn't back the student movement 100 per cent, you were a sellout. This wasn't too productive an approach to the problem of how to develop the majority constituencies that are essential to bring about significant change in this country. The students' view of the world was far from how everyday laborers, homemakers, teachers, clerks, welfare recipients and others with whom I worked, thought about what was going on at State (and in the student movement generally).

Rudd pays appropriate tribute to one of my favorite books about SNCC, Charles Payne's *I've Got The Light of Freedom*, and talks about Greenwood, MS, 1961-1964. I was on the SNCC staff, 1962 through 1966, and spent the summer of 1963 in the Mississippi Delta town of Greenwood – the subject of Payne's book – working with people like Sam Block, Wazir Peacock, Bob Moses, Martha Prescod, Stokely Carmichael, and others; I got to know Fanny Lou Hamer and a number of the local leaders there as well.

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In his interpretation of Payne, Rudd lets the blinders, rather than insights, of ideology take over. "Black churches," he writes, "usually had charismatic male ministers, who, as a consequence of their positions, led in an authoritarian manner." Rudd should look at this matter more closely. Any black minister who tried to lead in that fashion would soon find himself with a shrinking congregation or be thrown out by the lay board. While Rudd more or less gets the part about the women at the base of these churches and SNCC's "central organizing principle," his ideological impulse to polarize their role and the role of the ministers obscures the dialectical relationship that existed between them, and the many complexities of it.

Rudd juxtaposes "the developmental method" (which he approves of) to Alinsky-style organizing, which is usually characterized as top-down and manipulative. (Now, you can't beat "top-down" and "manipulative" for bogeyman words, can you?)

He elaborates, "For a first-hand view of Alinsky organizing, see Barack Obama's book…" Now, I don't want to take anything from the very smart and very talented Barack Obama, but one would hardly use a new organizer's work under a supervisor who worked for someone who never directly worked for Alinsky or one of Alinsky's major organizers as the source of a "first-hand view of Alinsky organizing." Nonetheless, Rudd asks decent questions: "Who trained him (Obama)? What was his training? Who paid him?... What is his relationship to the people he calls 'my leaders'?" He also asks, and here my antenna quiver in trepidation, "What is the guiding ideology?"

Then a familiar litany of anti-Alinsky-tradition organizing questions intrude: "Are they (his leaders) above him or are they manipulated by him? Who are calling whose shots? What are the long-term consequences?" And, no, Obama's book is not "a great piece to start a discussion on organizing with young organizers." Better to read Alinsky, Gaudette, von Hoffman, Chambers, Harmon, Cortez, Gecan, Trapp, Ganz, yours truly and others, who spent more time in the organizing work and who were directly trained by someone close to Alinsky.

Now, let's talk about two things here that deserve serious discussion on the part of people who want to learn from the past so they might avoid old misconceptions. First, let's look at the issue of "top-down" versus "bottom-up." When SNCC's Bob Moses first went to Mississippi, he had a list of respected leaders given to him by Ella Baker, a former director of Branches of the NAACP. They were people with whom she had worked earlier. When Moses arrived in McComb, it was through local leaders that he began his work. Here's a section from Wesley Hogan's excellent book on SNCC, *Many Minds, One Heart: SNCC's Dream for a New America* (University of North Carolina Press), along with some italicized notes by me:

"In July 1961, when Moses first arrived in McComb, Webb Owens, a retired railroad employee and treasurer of the local NAACP, picked up Moses and began making the rounds to every single black person of any kind of substance in the community. For two weeks, during each visit, Moses conversed with these leaders about his proposal to undertake a month-long voter registration project. [*This idea came out of Moses' earlier conversations with Cleveland, MS, NAACP leader Amzie Moore, to whom Moses was introduced by Ella Baker.*] Other SNCC staff members would come to help, he promised, if the community raised money to support them. At that point, Owens moved in with a closer. A smart, slim, cigar-smoking, cane-carrying, sharp-dressing gregarious man known in the community as "Super Cool Daddy," liked and trusted by all, Owens solicited contributions of five to ten dollars per person [*equal to $50 – $100 in today's dollars; at the same time, in the same period, Cesar Chavez asked even more in dues from farm workers*]. Before the rest of the SNCC staff arrived, the black community not only supported the project, it financed it as well.

Rev. Aurelius Walker, pastor of the True Hope Church of God in Christ, began his ministry by talking with prostitutes, pimps, alcoholics, drug abusers and other marginal African Americans.

"Surfacing here is one of the central causal dynamics of the civil rights revolution in the South of the 1960s. While SNCC people may not have broken down the recruiting process into its component parts, these components are now (and were at the time) quite visible: Moses would approach a local leader – in this case, Webb Owens. [*There is the preliminary component of getting an introduction to Owens from Amzie Moore via Ella Baker.*] He then listened to Owen's ideas and, in so doing, built a relationship. [*While listening is deservedly stressed, it is not all that Moses did – he had ideas of how to move forward in Mississippi, namely, the voter registration drive.*] Impressed, Owens led Moses to all of the potential leaders in the community, in the process exposing himself to great risks as a local NAACP leader. When he extended himself on behalf of Moses and asked citizens to financially support a voter registration drive, things began to happen. The quality of the local person that you go to work with is everything in terms of whether the project can get off the ground, Moses later explained. The McComb voter registration drive would not have taken off without someone like Owens."

Too many discussions of "grassroots organizing" and "top-down versus bottom-up organizing" ignore the lessons that are taught by this SNCC experience. Respected local leaders introduced Bob Moses into the local communities, in which voter registration projects started, and asked the local community to financially support the voter registration work that Moses and other SNCC field secretaries were going to do. To the question that might be asked of a SNCC worker, "Who sent you?", the answer was Webb Owens or Amzie Moore or CC Bryant or any of a number of respected local people who legitimized SNCC's presence in their community. Where that beginning legitimacy was lacking, the SNCC worker had to earn the right to meddle by gaining the trust of locally respected people. SNCC field secretary Charles McLauren wrote a paper on invited and uninvited organizers, and what the latter had to do to earn trust, which was the precondition to engaging people in "Movement" activity.

Over time, the SNCC workers them-

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selves became people to be trusted and respected – at least those who listened to local people, did good work, and stayed the course – as, for example, Sam Block and Willie Peacock in Greenwood, but when they first arrived in town as uninvited organizers, they slept in their cars because no one was ready to open his or her home to them. Their steadfastness, willingness to listen to and respect local people, and willingness to overcome fear and confront local racist power, all combined to earn them the right to provide the kind of leadership that organizers provide. This pattern was repeated by other SNCC field secretaries in other counties as well.

Sounds like you could call that "top-down," doesn't it? But, secondly, let's look at the ministers decried by Rudd, because it is through them that a lot of Alinsky's organizing was done. (It should be noted that in his black community organizing projects of the 1960s, there were also block clubs, tenant organizations, welfare rights groups, and others. And it is true that the institutional anchors for the organizations were the churches.)

Rev. Aurelius Walker, pastor of the True Hope Church of God in Christ (COGIC), began his ministry by talking with prostitutes, pimps, alcoholics, drug abusers and other marginal African Americans on the streets of San Francisco's Bayview neighborhood. He started holding small Bible study and revival meetings with them, helping them get straight jobs and kick their habits. After a number of years of this, he, they and others rented a storefront as a church. The congregation soon contributed enough for him to become a full-time pastor. The church grew, bought some land, constructed a new building, and, when I was last in regular touch with it, had a worshipping community of 1,000+ people, almost all African Americans, most low-to-moderate income. Internally, members were organized in small support-and-study groups that were called "auxiliaries." The budget came from the Sunday collection plate, pledges and fundraisers. When Organize Training Center was exploring a religion-labor alliance in San Francisco, organizer Larry Gordon talked with Rev. Walker about his church joining this alliance. Now, I suppose you could call that "top-down" organizing, but I hope you'll agree that calling it that obscures much more than it illuminates.

In the COGIC denomination, mostly black, Pentecostal in its theology, and mostly poor and working class, the way you become a bishop is by 20 congregations deciding they want to follow your leadership. So, if I were going to a new city hoping to involve the black community, including black Pentecostals, in an organizing effort, among the people to whom I'd want an introduction would be any COGIC bishops in town. And if I couldn't get someone to introduce me, I'd sure find a way to meet him or them because they'd be a good starting point – not the only one to be sure – to the rest of the COGIC believers in town.

When SNCC organizers first arrived in Greenwood, Mississippi, as uninvited organizers, they slept in their cars because no one was ready to open his or her home to them.

I won't go into the polity of the mainline Protestant denominations, but, for the most part, they have elected boards made up of lay people who take their roles very seriously; they include groups within the churches as well – men's groups, women's groups, youth groups, a choir, a senior club … and committees – social action, stewardship, etc. And if you think the way the Catholic Church works is that the pope tells bishops what to think and do, and they tell pastors what to think and do, and the pastors tell the laity what to think and do … you'll sure miss some organizing opportunities.

Rudd is inspiriting when he recognizes that he fell "under the spell of the illusion of revolution," abandoning organizing for militant confrontation ... and then armed urban guerilla warfare. But he's still hanging onto a lot of new left baggage – familiar biases that would take more time to unpack. That's too bad, because Rudd appears to be open to ideas on what mass organizing might be all about.

To return to more of Rudd's questions: "Are they (Obama's leaders) above him or are they manipulated by him? Who are calling whose shots? What are the long-term consequences?" Organizers influence people. Does that mean they manipulate them? Of course, it depends on how you define "manipulate." Any organizers I've ever known, who ever organized anything, want people with whom they're working to behave differently in the future than they've been behaving in the past. Otherwise, why should the organizer be there? A union organizer sent by "the international" goes into workplaces and tries to get respected workers to form an internal organizing committee that will, in turn, influence workers to support the organizing drive, become involved with it, vote for the union in a recognition election or participate in a card check, participate in union activities, and so on. But internal "salt" organizer does more or less the same thing. Insider or outsider, in order to build a powerful, democratic union, they have to move people from point A to point B. If you don't like what they're doing, you call it manipulation: isn't that what almost every employer calls what union organizers do? But I don't think this is what Rudd means.

The more negative meaning of manipulation is that you have a hidden agenda. Most of the Alinsky-tradition organizers I know who are successful in the work are very explicit about their agenda: they want to build people power organizations so that regular, everyday, discriminated against, exploited, marginalized people can influence and, hopefully, shape the decision-making processes that affect their lives. That takes substantial people power. Building it is what these organizers do. Along the way, they develop trusting relationships with the people with whom they work. Their biases may affect the questions they raise and what they do. From my point of view, given the crisis of these times, they are often too cautious. But that's a different point.

To return to SNCC for a moment, SNCC opened up new turf to organizing. The organization's two major flaws that in combination assured its demise were as follows. First, once the space opened up for organizing (when violence and intimidation diminished and citizens began to be registered to vote), more conservative and middle-class forces in the black community generally came to the fore, and local black people who had emerged from SNCC work joined the poverty

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program. SNCC simply lacked the tools to keep the poor majority in control of their movement. Second – and the first problem might have been overcome with time had this one not been so destructive – SNCC didn't know how to organize itself into an organization of organizers. To favor SNCC's bottom-up to Alinsky's top-down is to ignore the fact that SNCC failed to build black power that was an expression of the poor. Thus, for example, Fanny Lou Hamer became marginalized in Sunflower County – her home. And a number of years later, when mostly black catfish workers organized there, the black community organizations that were the descendants of what SNCC began failed to support them. A new book, *Bloody Lowndes*, by Hasan Jeffries, on Lowndes County, Alabama, where SNCC people organized the Lowndes County Freedom Organization (whose symbol was a black panther), sounds like it gives rich detail on the complexity of the organizing process there.

No doubt, Alinsky had his weaknesses. But there is much to learn from him about organizing that can contribute to what might now be a more transformative organizing process. In his warnings about a right-wing reaction bigger than what the student movement and other militants were doing in the late 1960s, he was dead-on accurate. We still live with that legacy, and would do well not to repeat its mistakes. Close to the end of his *CounterPunch* piece, Rudd says, "We abandoned organizing when more organizing was needed to build a permanent anti-imperialist mass movement." Substitute "mass movement for democracy and social and economic justice" for "anti-imperialist mass movement," and Rudd would be right on target.
CP

Alinsky was dead-on accurate on a coming right-wing reaction in the late 1960s.

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GREEN CONT. FROM PAGE 3

Jurisdiction the indictments may be sealed.

Messrs. Cheney, Rumsfeld, Feith, Addington and a host of lesser neocons have significant business interests abroad, particularly in Europe, and they will not necessarily know whether they are in criminal jeopardy if and when they travel. Moreover, many of the institutional/academic affiliations and sinecures in Washington and elsewhere, enjoyed by these gentlemen, may be at risk, as their legal battles are fought out in national and international media in the months and years to come.
CP

Excellent books on this subject are already on the market: *Torture Team* by Philippe Sands, *The Dark Side* by Jane Mayer, and *Universal Jurisdiction* by Stephen Macedo.

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